

## **CAPSULE SUMMARY**

**BA-2641**

**St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**7 W. Overlea Avenue**

**Baltimore, Baltimore County**

**1906**

**Private**

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, constructed in 1906, dates to an early period of growth and expansion in the Overlea community, a suburb on the northeast side of Baltimore City. As late as 1877, the land comprising Overlea, bordered on the southeast side by Belair Road, belonged primarily to Hy. Lang. Although the land along this portion of Belair Road had been subdivided, very little development had occurred through the late 1870s. In 1904, the United Railway and Electric Company extended a rail line along Belair Road at least to the Overlea area, which had previously been known as Lange's (or Lang's) Farm. This availability of transportation to Baltimore rendered the subdivided land of importance to developers, and the Overlea Land Company formed to spur development of the suburban area. It was at this point that St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church was constructed for the local residents. By 1911, the Overlea community was home to 830 people, many of whom were recent immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. The 1915 county atlas reveals that the subdivision, although platted with small residential lots, was no more than fifty percent developed. Many of the lots remained unimproved. In 1916, the Overlea Improvement League formed as an advocacy group for the needs of the local residents, and shortly thereafter, a public school was constructed in the neighboring community of Fullerton. Overlea has continued to grow through the late 20th century, and as Baltimore has expanded, the early 20th century development has been enveloped by the city as a near suburb.

This Gothic Revival Church fronts northeast at the hilly corner of Overlea and Spruce Streets. The church's structural system consists of coursed ashlar-cut stone. The front gable roof with slate tiles intersects with a projecting square tower on the façade and an interior-end chimney of ashlar-cut stone on the rear. The façade is dominated by the central tower standing three stories tall and is flanked by two buttressed wings. The crenellated tower has round-arched louvered vents on all four sides of the third story. The central window is stained glass with wood tracery and a stone lancet arch lintel. The main entry features a double-leaf wood door that is paneled. It is surrounded with a beveled wood tympanum and a stone lancet arch lintel. The side elevations have multi-light stained-glass windows with pointed arch lintels are separated by stone buttresses. The rear elevation features a round stained-glass window in the gable end with a stone surround and a stone gabled parapet. Located to the northeast of the church is an elementary school built in 1968. Standing two stories tall and five bays wide, the building has a stretcher bond brick veneer.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2641

### 1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic Saint James Evangelical Lutheran Church (preferred)

other

### 2. Location

street and number 7 W. Overlea Avenue not for publication

city, town Overlea vicinity

county Baltimore County

### 3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

street and number Overlea Avenue & Spruce Street telephone Not Available

city, town Baltimore state MD zip code 21206

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse liber 593 folio 107

city, town Towson tax map 81 tax parcel 748 tax ID number 1419001753

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			<input type="checkbox"/>

## 7. Description

Inventory No. BA-2641

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Constructed in 1906, this Gothic Revival Church fronts northeast at the hilly corner of Overlea and Spruce Streets. The church's structural system consists of coursed ashlar-cut stone. The front gable roof with slate tiles intersects with a projecting square tower on the façade and an interior-end chimney of ashlar-cut stone on the rear. The façade is dominated by the central tower standing three stories tall and is flanked by two buttressed wings. The crenellated tower has round-arched louvered vents on all four sides of the third story. The central window is stained glass with wood tracery and a stone lancet arch lintel. The main entry features a double-leaf wood door that is paneled. It is surrounded with a beveled wood tympanum and a stone lancet arch lintel. The side elevations have multi-light stained-glass windows with pointed arch lintels are separated by stone buttresses. The rear elevation features a round stained-glass window in the gable end with a stone surround and a stone gabled parapet.

Located to the northeast of the church is an elementary school built in 1968. Standing two stories tall and five bays wide, the building has a stretcher bond brick veneer. The roof is an applied mansard with asphalt shingles. The entry features a double-leaf door made of beaded diagonal board under a multi-light transom. Thirty-six grouped windows that consist of three fixed lights over a one-light hopper window pierce the facade.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-2641

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

**Specific dates** 1906-present

**Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Construction dates** 1906

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, constructed in 1906, is representative of the many Gothic Revival style churches erected in small towns and suburbs throughout Baltimore County in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and dates to an early period of growth and expansion in the Overlea community, a suburb on the northeast side of Baltimore City. As late as 1877, the land comprising Overlea, bordered on the southeast side by Belair Road, belonged primarily to Hy. Lang. Although the land along this portion of Belair Road had been subdivided, very little development had occurred through the late 1870s.<sup>1</sup> In 1904, the United Railway and Electric Company extended a rail line along Belair Road at least to the Overlea area, which had previously been known as Lange's (or Lang's) Farm. This availability of transportation to Baltimore rendered the subdivided land of importance to developers, and the Overlea Land Company formed to spur development of the suburban area. It was at this point that St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church was constructed for the local residents. By 1911, the Overlea community was home to 830 people, many of whom were recent immigrants from eastern and southern Europe.<sup>2</sup> The 1915 county atlas reveals that the subdivision, although platted with small residential lots, was no more than fifty percent developed. Many of the lots remained unimproved.<sup>3</sup> In 1916, the Overlea Improvement League formed as an advocacy group for the needs of the local residents, and shortly thereafter, a public school was constructed in the neighboring community of Fullerton.<sup>4</sup> Overlea has continued to grow through the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and as Baltimore has expanded, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development has been enveloped by the city as a near suburb.

Through its form, and ornament, St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church exhibits strong ties to the Gothic Revival style, which was an architectural style popularly used for the design of rural, suburban, and urban churches throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The buttressed rectangular building is dominated by a square, three-story tower, which relates it to Romanesque and early Gothic architecture of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe. The use of ornate window tracery making use of the ogee, quatrefoil, and trefoil motifs was common throughout the Gothic Revival style, for it imitated designs used in churches and cathedrals in Medieval and Renaissance Europe.

<sup>1</sup> *Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland* (Philadelphia, PA: G.M. Hopkins, 1877).

<sup>2</sup> Neal A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, *A History of Baltimore County* (Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979) pp. 325-326.

<sup>3</sup> *Map of Baltimore County* (Philadelphia, PA: G.W. Bromley, 1915).

<sup>4</sup> Brooks and Rockel, p. 326.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-2641

- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland.* Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.  
Baltimore County Historic Inventory.  
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.  
*Map of Baltimore County.* Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.  
Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.  
Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .50 Acre  
Acreage of historical setting Unknown  
Quadrangle name Baltimore East Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Since its construction in 1906, St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church has been associated with the 7,250 square feet of land known as tax parcel 748 of map 81 located in the Baltimore County Tax Assessor's office. The accompanying school has been associated with tax parcel 478 of map 81 since its construction in 1968 (deed reference: liber 3633, folio 189).

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	A. McDonald and A. Didden, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Traceries, Incorporated	date	May 21, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



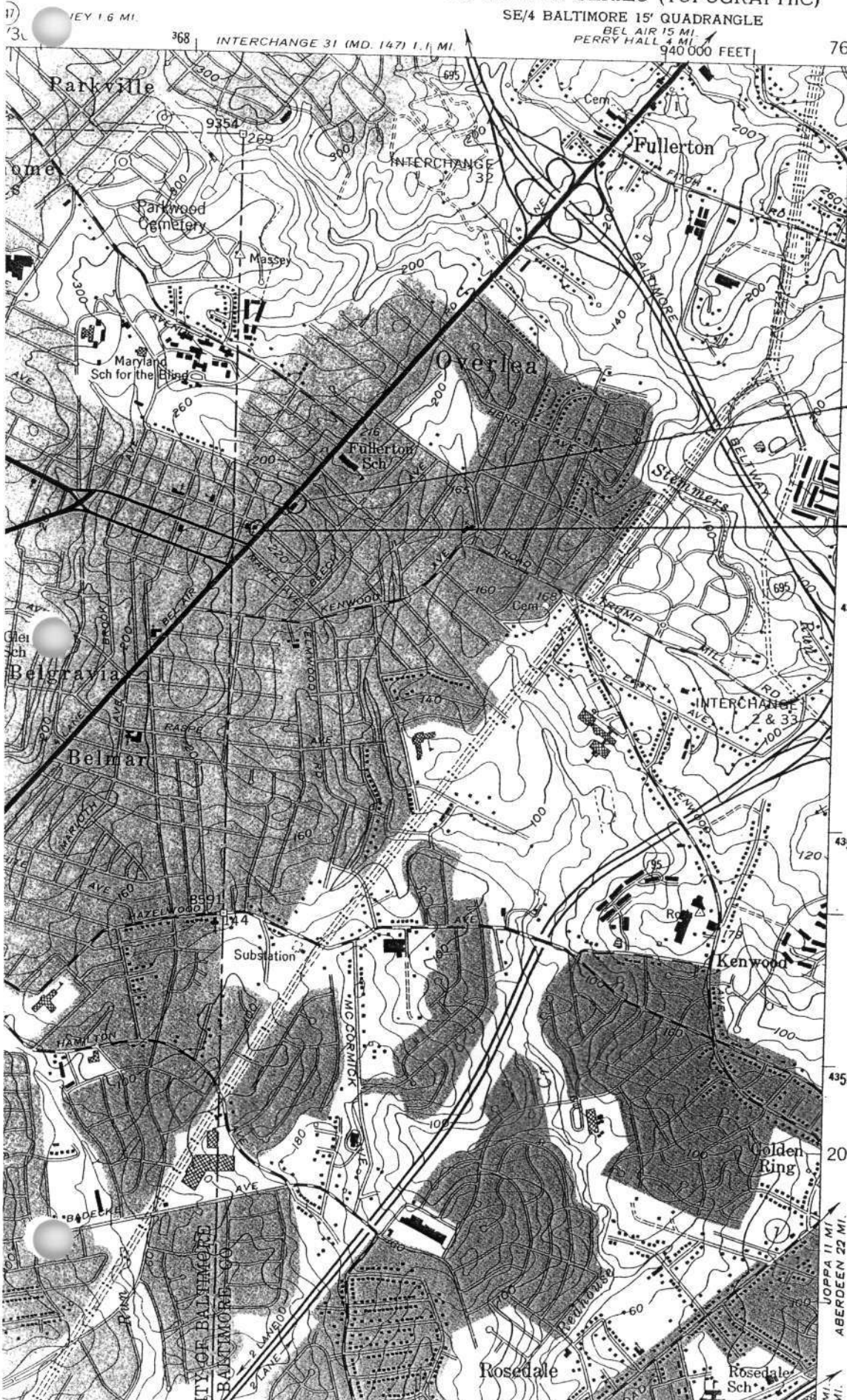
# BALTIMORE EAST QUADRANGLE

MARYLAND

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

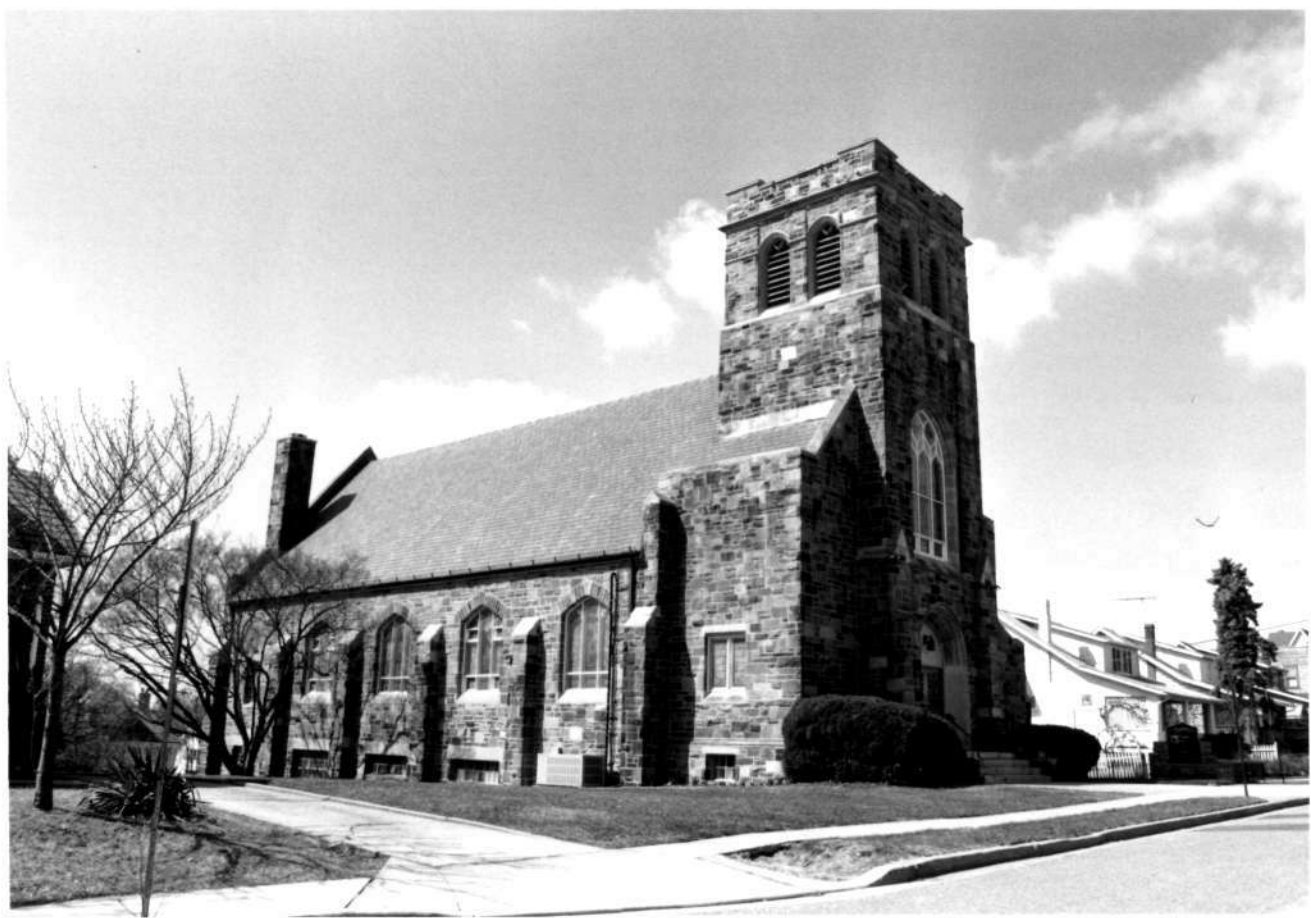
SE/4 BALTIMORE 15' QUADRANGLE

5762 IV NW  
(WHITE MARSH)



76°30'  
39°22'30"

BA 2641  
7.W. OVERLEA AVENUE  
BALTIMORE  
BALTIMORE COUNTY



BA-2641

7 W. OVERLEA AVENUE

OVERLEA

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERES

3/2001

MO-SHPD

EAST CORNER

1 of 3





BA 2641

7 W. OVERLEA AVENUE  
OVERLEA

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD  
TRAILER LBS

3/2001

MD-SPD

N CORNER

2 of 3



BA 2641

7 W. OVERSEA AVENUE

OVERSEA

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERES

3/2001

MD-SHPD

W CORNER

3 of 3

BA-2641

**ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH** - 1906 - 7 West Overlea Avenue at Spruce Street, southeast corner, west of Belair Road. Simplified Gothic style church built of Butler quartzite. Gable-roofed. Cornerstone reads "1906." Close to Baltimore City line. Located on a ridge or hilltop. School at No. 8 West Overlea.